

WEST SOMERSET COUNCIL

Minutes of Council held on 22 February 2017 at 4.30 pm

in the Council Chamber, Williton

Present:

Councillor B Heywood Chairman
Councillor R Woods Vice-Chairman

| | |
|-------------------------|--------------------------------|
| Councillor I Aldridge | Councillor A Behan |
| Councillor M J Chilcott | Councillor R Clifford |
| Councillor M O Dewdney | Councillor S Dowding |
| Councillor S Goss | Councillor A Hadley |
| Councillor T Hall | Councillor I Jones |
| Councillor R Lillis | Councillor B Maitland-Walker |
| Councillor P H Murphy | Councillor J Parbrook |
| Councillor S J Pugsley | Councillor R Thomas |
| Councillor N Thwaites | Councillor A H Trollope-Bellew |
| Councillor K H Turner | Councillor T Venner |
| Councillor D J Westcott | |

Officers in Attendance:

Chief Executive (P James)
Director of Operations (S Adam)
Assistant Chief Executive (B Lang)
Assistant Director Energy Infrastructure (A Goodchild)
Assistant Director – Resources (P Fitzgerald)
Finance Manager (J Nacey)
Community and Housing Lead HPC (L Redston) – Item 6
Housing Initiatives Officer HPC (B Brown) – Item 6
Senior Economic Development Officer (G Dwyer) – Item 7
Media and Communications Officer (D Rundle)
Meeting Administrator (K Kowalewska)

C72 Apologies for Absence

Apologies for absence were received from Councillors H Davies and K Mills.

C73 Minutes

(Minutes of the meeting of Council held on 14 December 2016, circulated with the Agenda.)

RESOLVED that the Minutes of the meeting of Council held on 14 December 2016 be confirmed as a correct record.

C74 **Declarations of Interest**

Members present at the meeting declared the following personal interests in their capacity as a Member of a County, Parish or Town Council:

| Name | Minute No. | Member of | Action Taken |
|--------------------------|-------------------|------------------|---------------------|
| Cllr I Aldridge | All | Williton | Spoke and voted |
| Cllr S Goss | All | Stogursey | Spoke and voted |
| Cllr B Maitland-Walker | All | Carhampton | Spoke and voted |
| Cllr P Murphy | All | Watchet | Spoke and voted |
| Cllr J Parbrook | All | Minehead | Spoke and voted |
| Cllr R Thomas | All | Minehead | Spoke and voted |
| Cllr N Thwaites | All | Dulverton | Spoke and voted |
| Cllr A H Trollope-Bellew | All | Crowcombe | Spoke and voted |
| Cllr K H Turner | All | Brompton Ralph | Spoke and voted |
| Cllr T Venner | All | Minehead & SCC | Spoke and voted |
| Cllr D J Westcott | All | Watchet | Spoke and voted |

In addition, the following interests were declared:

| Name | Minute No. | Description of interest | Personal or Prejudicial | Action Taken |
|------------------------|-------------------|--------------------------------|--------------------------------|---------------------|
| Cllr M Chilcott | C77 | Landlord | Personal | Spoke and voted |
| Cllr S Dowding | C77 | Landlord | Personal | Spoke and voted |
| Cllr S Pugsley | C77 | Landlord | Personal | Spoke and voted |
| Cllr A Trollope-Bellew | C77 | Landlord | Personal | Spoke and voted |
| Cllr K Turner | C77 | Landlord | Personal | Spoke and voted |
| Cllr D Westcott | C77 | Landlord | Personal | Spoke and voted |

All members present had a prejudicial interest in Minute No. C83 but having disclosed this interest were permitted to speak and vote in accordance with the code of conduct.

C75 **Public Participation**

Agenda Item 11 – Annual Budget and Council Tax 2017/18

Keith Routledge, West Somerset Advice Bureau Trustee and volunteer advisor, spoke in relation to the grant West Somerset Council gave to the Bureau. He informed Members of the range of work provided by the charity and advised that in order to meet the challenge of reduced funding staff numbers had been cut. To date, bids to fund advice work had not been successful or forthcoming. The day to day services were at risk and he provided information on what actions were being taken to sustain the future delivery of the service in West Somerset, which included forming a partnership with Citizens Advice at Sedgemoor to work together to save costs and improve specialist support, as well as submitting a combined bid for Community Impact Mitigation funding.

C76 Chairman's Announcements

Both the Chairman and Vice-Chairman attended the Minehead Mayor's Civic Service on 5 February 2017 at the Sacred Heart Church, Minehead.

C77 Hinkley Point C Housing Fund Strategy (Phase 2)

(Report No. WSC 21/17, circulated with the Agenda.)

The purpose of the report was to present the Phase 2 Hinkley Point C Housing Fund Strategy for approval.

The Lead Member for Housing, Health and Welfare presented the report and provided background information. He drew attention to key points contained within the Housing Fund Strategy and advised that the newly appointed Housing Initiatives Officer would be involved in supporting the Strategy's housing schemes and initiatives.

The Lead Member proposed the recommendation of the report which was duly seconded by Councillor D Westcott.

Various questions and issues were raised by Members relating to the Hinkley Housing Board and how initiatives were promoted and monitored. With regards to the funding allocated to West Somerset, it was advised that, to create more bed spaces, the Council would be happy to partner with any developers or organisations who were looking to deliver housing in West Somerset.

RESOLVED that the principles and outline expenditure as set out in the Phase 2 Hinkley Point C Housing Fund Strategy be approved and responsibility for approving minor amendments to the planned expenditure set out in the Strategy to the Hinkley Housing Board be delegated.

C78 Hinkley Point C Development Consent Obligation Section 106 – Business Support Initiatives

(Report No. WSC 18/17, circulated with the Agenda.)

The purpose of the report was to outline proposals relating to the Business Support Initiatives allocation for West Somerset that forms part of the HPC Development Consent Order Section 106 Agreement.

In the absence of the Lead Member for Regeneration and Economic Development, the Leader introduced the item and encouraged Members to read Appendix A of the report which summarised all the good work which had been achieved during phase 1 by the Economic Development Team.

The Leader proposed the recommendation which was seconded by Councillor A Hadley.

The Senior Economic Development Officer provided a summary of the future proposals in years 3 and 4 of the economic development allocation and indicated that details of the key performance indicators for each of the allocations were provided in the report.

Members were fully supportive of the proposal. The funding for economic development was vital in West Somerset and there was a need to assist and support local businesses. The work undertaken so far for business support initiatives demonstrated good examples of match funding and it was hoped this would continue into the next phase.

RESOLVED that the proposals detailed in paragraph 4.5 of the report and the drawdown of the HPC S106 Business Support Initiatives allocation for West Somerset of £159,792 to support and grow economic development activity in West Somerset aligned to the impacts and opportunities created by the HPC Project be agreed.

C79 **Loan to Somerset Waste Partnership for Vehicles to support the New Operating Model**

(Report No. WSC 22/17, circulated with the Agenda.)

The purpose of the report was to provide detail in relation to a request to lend £3.5m to Somerset Waste Partnership (SWP) for the purchase of new vehicles associated with the New Operating Model. There may be a later request for a further advance in relation to new or reconfigured depots but the details of these and the funding required was not yet available.

The Lead Member for Resources and Central Support presented the report and advised that the matter had been debated fully at previous meetings. She went on to propose the recommendations which were seconded by Councillor M Dewdney.

Members expressed support for providing a loan to Somerset Waste Partnership. It was suggested the Council should actively look at other similar schemes in which it could borrow money to lend in order to receive additional financial benefits. It was also considered sensible to look at any future requests from SWP sympathetically, should they be forthcoming for more money relating to new depots.

RESOLVED (1) that the provision of £3.5m capital loan to the Somerset Waste Partnership in 2017/18, to fund the acquisition of new vehicles, based on PWLB rate + 1% with final terms and conditions to be agreed by the S151 Officer be approved.

RESOLVED (2) that the associated budget of £3.5m be included in the Capital Programme for 2017/18.

C80 **Capital Programme 2017/18**

(Report No. WSC 23/17, circulated with the Agenda.)

The purpose of the report was to approve the recommended Capital Programme for 2017/18 including the proposed funding arrangements.

The Lead Member for Resources and Central Support presented the item and made reference to the fact that the Capital Programme for 2017/18 only included bids for absolutely essential spend on services.

The Lead Member proposed the recommendations which were duly seconded by Councillor B Maitland-Walker.

RESOLVED (1) that the 2017/18 Capital Programme Budget totalling £3,872,500, funded through a combination of capital receipts reserves, external grant funding and borrowing be approved.

RESOLVED (2) that authority be delegated to the S151 Officer to approve adjustments to the 2017/18 Disabled Facilities Grant Capital Budget to reflect the final grant funding received from the Better Care Fund.

RESOLVED (3) that a supplementary budget allocation of £43,200 for the Sustainability Capital Fund to assist with the transfer of public conveniences, funded from the Capital Receipts Reserve be approved.

C81 **Treasury Management Strategy Statement, Annual Investment Strategy and MRP Policy 2017/18**

(Report No. WSC 24/17, circulated with the Agenda.)

The purpose of the report was to inform Members of the recommended strategy for managing the Council's cash resources including the approach to borrowing and investments. It also sought the formal approval of the Treasury Management Strategy Statement, Annual Investment Strategy and MRP Policy which must be approved by Council by 31 March each year in line with regulations.

The Lead Member for Resources and Central Support presented the report and drew attention to the proposed operational boundary. She went on to propose the recommendations in the report which were seconded by Councillor S Pugsley.

In response to a question relating to how much of the Seaward Way Project capital expenditure had been spent, the Finance Manager undertook to provide the information following the meeting.

RESOLVED (1) that the Treasury Management Strategy Statement (TMSS), Annual Investment Strategy and Minimum Revenue Provision Policy for 2017/18 as included with the report be approved.

RESOLVED (2) that the Prudential indicators included within the TMSS which include limits for borrowing and investment be approved.

RESOLVED (3) that the change to the Council's Minimum Revenue Provision (MRP) Policy to include the treatment of third party loans be approved.

C82

Annual Budget and Council Tax 2017/18

(Report No. WSC 25/17, circulated with the Agenda.)

The purpose of the report was to provide Members with the information required to approve the proposed revenue budget for 2017/18, and to approve its proposed Council Tax rate for 2017/18. The proposed 2017/18 Capital Programme, the revenue implications of which were taken into account within the revenue budget, was included as a separate report to the agenda.

The Lead Member for Resources and Central Support presented the report in detail, emphasising the important facts and figures contained within. She thanked the public speaker and stressed the Council appreciated and greatly valued the work undertaken by the Citizens Advice Bureau, and the Council would do its very best to continue to provide support.

The Lead Member emphasised that despite facing a 36% (over £¾ million) reduction in general revenue grant funding, the Council had, by using reserves, achieved a balanced budget and this was a great achievement. The volatility of the Hinkley Point B business rates and the impact of this on the Council's finances was acknowledged, and assurance was given that lobbying would continue to obtain stability on the matter.

The Lead Member underlined the significant challenges facing the Council and how important it was to now start planning on how to make savings for the following year, and hoped that by working together this would be achieved. The Council would continue to lobby for a fairer share in rural areas as this formed part of the challenge.

It was noted that details of the Final Local Government Finance Settlement had been received and no changes to the figures contained within the report were proposed.

The Lead Member proposed the recommendations of the report which were duly seconded by Councillor N Thwaites.

The hard work of the Finance Team was acknowledged and Members thanked everyone who had been involved in preparing the budget paper.

During the lengthy debate various questions and issues were raised, in particular with regard to the feasibility of increasing council tax and the retention of business rates in order to close the budget gap in future years.

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Concern was expressed about the reduction in funding to the West Somerset Advice Bureau. Councillor P Murphy proposed an amendment to recommendation 2.2 of the report to read "Full Council approves the 2017/18 Budget with the proposed saving of £3,400 to West Somerset Advice Bureau reinstated and funded from the General Reserves for 2017/18." This was seconded by Councillor T Hall.

The Lead Member for Resources and Central Support advised of plans for the Council to launch a local lottery which would help to support voluntary and community sector organisations such as the Citizens Advice Bureau, and asked Members to consider this before voting.

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|------------------------------|---------|------------------------------|---------|
| Councillor I Aldridge | For | Councillor A Behan | For |
| Councillor M Chilcott | Against | Councillor R Clifford | For |
| Councillor M Dewdney | Against | Councillor S Dowding | Against |
| Councillor S Goss | For | Councillor A Hadley | Against |
| Councillor T Hall | For | Councillor B Heywood | Against |
| Councillor I Jones | For | Councillor R Lillis | For |
| Councillor B Maitland-Walker | Against | Councillor P Murphy | For |
| Councillor J Parbrook | Against | Councillor R Thomas | Against |
| Councillor N Thwaites | Abstain | Councillor A Trollope-Bellew | Against |
| Councillor K Turner | Against | Councillor D Westcott | Against |
| Councillor R Woods | Against | | |

On being put to the vote the amendment was declared LOST.

There was no further debate and it was agreed to vote on the recommendations contained in the report separately.

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|------------------------------|-----|------------------------------|-----|
| Councillor I Aldridge | For | Councillor A Behan | For |
| Councillor M Chilcott | For | Councillor R Clifford | For |
| Councillor M Dewdney | For | Councillor S Dowding | For |
| Councillor S Goss | For | Councillor A Hadley | For |
| Councillor T Hall | For | Councillor B Heywood | For |
| Councillor I Jones | For | Councillor R Lillis | For |
| Councillor B Maitland-Walker | For | Councillor P Murphy | For |
| Councillor J Parbrook | For | Councillor R Thomas | For |
| Councillor N Thwaites | For | Councillor A Trollope-Bellew | For |
| Councillor K Turner | For | Councillor D Westcott | For |
| Councillor R Woods | For | | |

RESOLVED (1) that the forecast Medium Term Financial Plan and Reserves position, and the S151 Officer's Robustness Statement as set out in Appendix C of the report be noted.

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| Councillor I Aldridge | Against | Councillor A Behan | For |
| Councillor M Chilcott | For | Councillor R Clifford | For |
| Councillor M Dewdney | For | Councillor S Dowding | For |
| Councillor S Goss | For | Councillor A Hadley | For |
| Councillor T Hall | For | Councillor B Heywood | For |
| Councillor I Jones | For | Councillor R Lillis | For |

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|------------------------------|-----|------------------------------|---------|
| Councillor B Maitland-Walker | For | Councillor P Murphy | Against |
| Councillor J Parbrook | For | Councillor R Thomas | For |
| Councillor N Thwaites | For | Councillor A Trollope-Bellew | For |
| Councillor K Turner | For | Councillor D Westcott | For |
| Councillor R Woods | For | | |

RESOLVED (2) that the 2017/18 Budget be approved.

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|------------------------------|---------|------------------------------|-----|
| Councillor I Aldridge | For | Councillor A Behan | For |
| Councillor M Chilcott | For | Councillor R Clifford | For |
| Councillor M Dewdney | For | Councillor S Dowding | For |
| Councillor S Goss | For | Councillor A Hadley | For |
| Councillor T Hall | Against | Councillor B Heywood | For |
| Councillor I Jones | Against | Councillor R Lillis | For |
| Councillor B Maitland-Walker | For | Councillor P Murphy | For |
| Councillor J Parbrook | For | Councillor R Thomas | For |
| Councillor N Thwaites | For | Councillor A Trollope-Bellew | For |
| Councillor K Turner | For | Councillor D Westcott | For |
| Councillor R Woods | For | | |

RESOLVED (3) that a 2017/18 Council Tax increase of 3.4%, increasing the Band D basic tax rate by £5 to £152.32, comprising £150.56 for services and £1.76 on behalf of the Somerset Rivers Authority be approved.

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|------------------------------|-----|------------------------------|-----|
| Councillor I Aldridge | For | Councillor A Behan | For |
| Councillor M Chilcott | For | Councillor R Clifford | For |
| Councillor M Dewdney | For | Councillor S Goss | For |
| Councillor A Hadley | For | Councillor T Hall | For |
| Councillor B Heywood | For | Councillor I Jones | For |
| Councillor R Lillis | For | Councillor B Maitland-Walker | For |
| Councillor P Murphy | For | Councillor J Parbrook | For |
| Councillor R Thomas | For | Councillor N Thwaites | For |
| Councillor A Trollope-Bellew | For | Councillor K Turner | For |
| Councillor D Westcott | For | Councillor R Woods | For |

RESOLVED (4) that £143,100 from existing capital receipts reserves is set aside to fund capital debt repayment in 2018/19, in lieu of Minimum Revenue Provision, and the RCCO provision of £39,000 per year from 2018/19 onwards is removed from the MTFP.

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|------------------------------|---------|------------------------------|-----|
| Councillor I Aldridge | For | Councillor A Behan | For |
| Councillor M Chilcott | For | Councillor R Clifford | For |
| Councillor M Dewdney | For | Councillor S Goss | For |
| Councillor A Hadley | For | Councillor T Hall | For |
| Councillor B Heywood | For | Councillor I Jones | For |
| Councillor R Lillis | For | Councillor B Maitland-Walker | For |
| Councillor P Murphy | Against | Councillor J Parbrook | For |
| Councillor R Thomas | For | Councillor N Thwaites | For |
| Councillor A Trollope-Bellew | For | Councillor K Turner | For |

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| Councillor D Westcott | For | Councillor R Woods | For |
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RESOLVED (5) that a £75,000 transfer from 2016/17 in-year underspends to the Business Rates Smoothing Reserve to maintain adequate reserve balances in 2017/18 be approved.

C83 Council Tax Resolution 2017/18

(Report No. WSC 26/17, circulated with the Agenda. Amended Appendix B circulated prior to the Meeting.)

The purpose of the report was to approve the calculation and setting of the Council Tax for 2017/18.

The Lead Member for Resources and Central Support presented the item and highlighted a change in the report to the Devon and Somerset Fire and Rescue Authority precept and that it should be £1,1305.94.

The Lead Member proposed the recommendations which were duly seconded by Councillor N Thwaites.

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|------------------------------|-----|------------------------------|-----|
| Councillor I Aldridge | For | Councillor A Behan | For |
| Councillor M Chilcott | For | Councillor R Clifford | For |
| Councillor M Dewdney | For | Councillor S Goss | For |
| Councillor A Hadley | For | Councillor T Hall | For |
| Councillor B Heywood | For | Councillor I Jones | For |
| Councillor R Lillis | For | Councillor B Maitland-Walker | For |
| Councillor P Murphy | For | Councillor J Parbrook | For |
| Councillor R Thomas | For | Councillor N Thwaites | For |
| Councillor A Trollope-Bellew | For | Councillor K Turner | For |
| Councillor D Westcott | For | Councillor R Woods | For |

RESOLVED (1) that the formal Council Tax Resolution as set out in Appendix A to the report be approved.

RESOLVED (2) that the total Band D Council Tax be noted to be as follows:

| | 2016/17 | 2017/18 | Increase |
|---------------------------------------|-----------------|-----------------|-------------|
| | £ | £ | % |
| West Somerset Council | 145.56 | 150.56 | 3.44 |
| West Somerset Council - SRA | 1.76 | 1.76 | 0.00 |
| Somerset County Council | 1,048.00 | 1,069.52 | 1.99 |
| Somerset County Council – Social Care | 20.80 | 42.43 | 2.00 |
| Somerset County Council – SRA | 12.84 | 12.84 | 0.00 |
| Police and Crime Commissioner | 178.26 | 181.81 | 1.99 |
| Devon & Somerset Fire Authority | 79.98 | 81.57 | 1.99 |
| Sub-Total | 1,487.20 | 1,540.49 | 3.58 |
| Town and Parish Council (average) | 67.09 | 68.76 | 2.50 |
| Total | 1,554.29 | 1,609.25 | 3.54 |

C84 **Minutes and Notes for Information**

(Minutes and Notes relating to this item, circulated via the Council's website.)

RESOLVED (1) that the notes of the Watchet, Williton and Quantock Vale Area Panel meeting held on 6 December 2016 be noted.

RESOLVED (2) that the notes of the Minehead Area Panel meeting held on 7 December 2016 be noted.

RESOLVED (3) that the notes of the Dunster Area Panel meeting held on 23 January 2017 be noted.

RESOLVED (4) that the notes of the Exmoor Area Panel meeting held on 17 January 2017 be noted.

Note: Councillor T Venner left at 5.45 pm
Councillor S Pugsley left at 6.15 pm
Councillor S Dowding left at 6.30 pm

The meeting closed at 6.48 pm